

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

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C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 3584

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, A

SUBJECT: GENERAL ELECTION - NO. 6 - THE OPPOSITION PARTIES
(SOCIAL DEMOCRATS)

REF: COPENHAGEN 3546, 3579

SUMMARY. THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION FINDS THE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN AN IDENTITY CRISIS: DIVIDED INTO
A LEFT AND RIGHT WING GROUP WITH AN INSECURE
LEADERSHIP. THE INCREASED SUCCESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
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WILL, MOREOVER, FORCE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO FIGHT THE

ELECTION ON TWO FRONTS, FURTHER EXACERBATING THE ENDEMIC DIVISION WITHIN THE PARTY. UNLESS THE PARTY MAKES A RESPECTABLE GAIN, THE CONTINUED LEADERSHIP OF ANKER JORGENSEN MAY BE IN JEOPARDY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP) HAS NOT YET RESOLVED ITS BASIC DIVISION BETWEEN A LEFT WING WHICH SEES THE PARTY'S ROLE AS THAT OF TRANSFORMING SOCIETY IN A SOCIALIST DIRECTION AND A RIGHT WING WHICH IS AFRAID OF THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF UNTRIED REFORMS AND CONCEIVES OF THE PARTY'S ROLE AS BEING THE PRAGMATIC DEFENDER OF TRADITIONAL WORKER AND PENSIONER INTERESTS. THE PARTY CONGRESS IN SEPTEMBER ADMITTED THAT THE RESOLUTION OF THIS INTERNAL CONFLICT HAD NOT YET BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND POINTED UP THE POLITICAL INCONSISTENCY IN THE FACT THAT WHILE THE PARTY WAS ADVOCATING ONE OF THE MORE RADICAL PROPOSALS FOR GRADUAL SOCIALIZATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR OF THE COUNTRY - ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY - OVER HALF OF THE PARTY'S REGULAR MEMBERSHIP WAS OVER FIFTY YEARS OF AGE AND ONE-THIRD OF THE PARTY'S VOTERS WERE RETIRED PENSIONERS. THIS INTERNAL DIVISION IS THE MORE SERIOUS BECAUSE THE PARTY MUST FIGHT THE ELECTION ON TWO FRONTS.

2. THE ATTACK FROM THE LEFT. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY WILL IN THIS ELECTION FACE THE STRONGEST CHALLENGE FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY DKP SINCE THE EARLY 1950S. THE DKP HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN RECENT SHOP STEWARD ELECTIONS AND THEIR INROADS ARE BEING MADE IN THE SOLID BLUE COLLAR WORKER CORE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM THAT THE PARTIES TO THE LEFT OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS MERELY RE-DISTRIBUTE THE SAME TEN PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE HELD TRUE IN THE 1973 ELECTION BUT WILL NOT IN THE FORTHCOMING ONE. THE BASIC ATTACK FROM THE PARTIES ON THE LEFT IS THAT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE LO LEADERSHIP, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE BEEN COOPTED INTO THE CAPITALIST ESTABLISHMENT AND ARE NOT ACTIVELY COMMITTED TO A SOCIALIZATION OF SOCIETY IN FAVOR OF THE WORKERS. IN THE MATAPHOR OF ONE WRITER, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS AN OLD MAN WHO STILL LOOKS AT PRETTY GIRLS BUT HAS FORGOTTEN WHY.

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3. THE ATTACK FROM THE RIGHT. ON THE OTHER SIDE, THE ATTACK FROM THE GOVERNING LIBERAL PARTY IS MORE SERIOUS. BY CALLING AN ELECTION WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT IS AT RECORD LEVELS THE GOVERNMENT IS CLEARLY PLAYING ON THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER'S FEAR OF ECONOMIC CHAOS AND LOSS OF INCOME - A RATHER DANGEROUS TACTIC BUT ONE WHICH IS UNDOUBTEDLY WORKING IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FAVOR AT THIS POINT. AT THE SAME TIME THE

GOVERNING LIBERALS ARE SEEKING TO UNDERScore THE RADICALISM OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ECONOMIC PROGRAM BY MAKING FORMER PRIMIN ANKER JORGENSEN THE SYMBOL OF HIS PARTY. COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO SOLVE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IS PRECONDITIONED, PRIMIN HARTLING HAS DECLARED, UPON THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S CHOOSING ANOTHER LEADER THAN ANKER JORGENSEN. TO CLINCH THE ARGUMENT, EHE LIBERAL'S POLITICAL SPOKESMAN, HENNING CHRISTOPHERSEN, HAS FLATLY STATED THAT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY PROPOSAL, WHICH IS PRIMARILY IDENTIFIED WITH ANKER JORGENSEN, CANNOT BE ACCEPTED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S CRISIS PLAN.

4. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC TACTICS. FACED WITH THIS TWO-FRONT WAR IN WHICH THE TACTICS APPROPRIATE TO COUNTER THE COMMUNIST ATTACK WOULD NECESSARILY ALIENAT THE NON-RADICAL, WOORED VOTER IN THE POLITICAL MIDDLE, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE CLEARLY DECIDED TO RISK LOSSES ON THE LEFT AND CONCENTRATE ON REGAINING GROUND IN THE POLITICAL MIDDLE. THE PARTY'S LOSSES WERE FAR GEATER TO ERHARD JAKOBSEN'S CENTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY THAN TO THE LEFT IN THE 1973 ELECTION. THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE CENTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN RECENT MONTHS REVELARED BY THE POLLS INDICATES THAT EITHER THE LIBERALS OR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS STAND TO INHERIT THE EIGHT PERCENT OF THE VOTE WHICH FELL TO JAKOBSEN IN 1973. CONSEQUENTLY, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE TAKING A VERY CONSERVATIVE STANCE IN THEIR ELECTIONEERING, BEHIN DHT SLOGAN "A RETURN TO SECRUTIY."

5. ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY. THE PARTY'S (AND TRADE UIONS) PROPOSAL FOR ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY (ED) IS PROBABLY STILL A NEGATIVE FACTOR IN ITS OVERALL PUBLIC APPEAL BUT LESS SO THAN IT WAS IN 1973
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WHEN IT WAS A PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN THE PARTY'S MOST DISASTROUS DEFEAT. THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AT THE SHOP STEWARD AND LOCAL OFFICIAL LEVEL IS SOLIDLY IN FAVOR OF ED AND THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME MOVEMENT TOWARD ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY MAY BE INCLUDED IN THE OVERALL NATIONAL WAGE NEGOTIATIONS FOLLOWING THE ELECTION. WHILE MAINTAINING THE CONDITION THAT ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY MUST BE PART OF A TOTAL ECONOMIC INCOMES POLICY, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE HINTED THAT THEY WILL NOT BE UNREASONABLE ON THIS MATTER. THEY HOPE, IN SHORT, TO UNDERPLAY THIS ISSUE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

6. THE LEADERSHIP PROBLEM. IT IS GENERALLY ADMITTED THAT ANKER JORGENSEN HAS NOT THUS FAR DISPLAYED THE LEADERSHIP ABILITY NECESSARY TO HOLD BOTH WINGS OF THE

PARTY IN DISCIPLINATED COOPERATION AS HIS PREDECESSOR JENS OTTO Krag HAD. THERE HAVE BEEN EFFORTS DURING RECENT MONTHS TO FLOAT THE IDEA OF A CHANGE IN LEADERS. KRAGE HIMSELF MAY BE A CANDIDATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LIBERALS ATTACK ON THE PERSON F JORGENSEN MAY BE BACKFIRING, SDP OFFICIALS HAVE COME TOGETHER IN JORGENSEN'S DEFENSE AND PUT OUT THE WORD THAT THE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES ARE AFRAID OF HIM. JORGENSEN HIMSELF IS TAKING A LOW PROFILE BY MAINTAINING THAT IT IS THE PARTY THAT COUNTS, NOT THE INDIVIDUAL. IN ANY EVENT, UNLESS THE PARTY MAKES FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL GAINS IN THE JAN 9 ELECTION (FIVE OR MORE ADDITIONAL SEATS) JORGENSEN'S LEADERSHIP WILL BE IN JEOPARDY.

7. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS REMAIN A PARTY IN TROUBLE. AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE JAN 21 MEETING OF NORDIC SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS IN COPENHAGEN STATED PRIVATELY TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER, "WE ARE NOT SURE WHAT WENT WRONG*" THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION, CONSEQUENTLY, WILL BE A FATEFUL ONE FOR THE DANISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.
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